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# RUTHERFORD BIRCHARD HAYES





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THE GREAT COMMONER OF OHIO.

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DISCOURSE

IN MEMORY OF

RUTHERFORD BIRCHARD HAYES

DELIVERED IN THE

First Congregational Church,

COLUMBUS, OHIO,

JANUARY 22, 1893.

BY

REV. WASHINGTON GLADDEN, D. D.

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# RUTHERFORD BIRCHARD HAYES.

OCTOBER 4, 1822. JANUARY 17, 1893.

WE have studied here, more than once, the lesson of some great life. In no other form does Truth present herself with so much quickening for the intellect, with so much invigoration of the will. For this reason chiefly was the Word made flesh. All highest revelation to men must come through the form of a man. The story of a life worthily lived is more convincing than logic, more instructive than philosophy; it carries an element which transcends all the formularies of science; it contains within itself all that gives the moving thrill to music, and immortality to verse.

Thrice, already, since the summer rest, have we been invited to such a sympathetic study of great lives that had suddenly ceased from among us; the Editor and Essayist, Curtis; our Quaker Poet, Whittier; the Laureate of England, Tennyson. To-night we are called together to reflect for an hour upon

the meaning of a life whose sudden termination has brought to this commonwealth and this nation a great bereavement. To the people of Ohio and especially to the people of Columbus, the death of President Hayes comes a great deal closer than that of either of the notable men whom I have named. To them our debt was large, but it was mainly intellectual. For the enriching of our minds, for the quickening of our better purposes we owed them much. But President Hayes has been our neighbor and our friend; he has walked with us by the way; he has talked with us at our firesides; in our public assemblies he was a not unwonted, and always welcome presence; in a great many of the concerns in which our hearts were most engaged, he was our wise counsellor and staunch helper; the abrupt and unexpected cessation of a force like this is a real shock to our community; and the absence of such a comrade from our toil, of such a friend from our familiar circles, brings a sense of personal loss and loneliness.

I have named him the Great Commoner. This title was given first to William Pitt, in the days before he was Earl of Chatham; it was the popular tribute to a lofty spirit who was "the first to discern," as one of his biographer's phrases it, "that public opinion, though

generally slow to form and slow to act, is in the end the paramount power in the state; and the first to use it, not in an emergency merely, but throughout a long political career." William Pitt was the Great Commoner so long as he kept in touch with the people; no man ever had greater power in England; he was put at the head of the greatest ministry that ever ruled England, not because King or Parliament wished it, but because the people would have it. Years afterward, when he suffered himself to be elevated to the peerage, he came down from his throne. The title has descended to the man who is now Prime Minister of England, and who has won it very much as Pitt first won it, by identifying himself with the people. Warned by the fate of Pitt, it is not at all probable that Gladstone will ever be tempted to exchange for the bauble of a peerage that place which he holds in the hearts of his countrymen.

Our own Great Commoner has won the title by the same qualities. He, too, was essentially and pre-eminentlly a man of the people. From the common people he rose, and he never rose above them. That persistent determination of his to walk in the ranks in the Grand Army parades has been censured by some as affectation. But to President Hayes it was

the simple expression of a fact which he would neither deny nor ignore. He was a plain citizen, nothing more; he would not masquerade as anything else. While he held the chief magistracy of the nation he magnified the office; when he laid it down, he returned to his place. He knew the dignity of office; he knew, also, the dignity of private citizenship.

The relations of President Hayes to the Commonwealth of Ohio are, as I have said, peculiarly intimate. He was born upon her soil; most of his education was gained in her schools; all his professional life was spent in this State; the troops that he led in the war of the rebellion were nearly all Ohio soldiers; Ohio sent him to represent her in the National Congress, and thrice made him her Governor; it was from the Capital of Ohio that he was translated to the White House at Washington; and since he laid aside the arduous burdens of government, this State has been his constant home. To multitudes in other States his great services have endeared him; but Ohio has the largest share in his renown. I think it must be allowed that he was her greatest citizen—the finest product, on the whole, of her century of history. That is a large claim, but I advance it with some confidence. When the future historian comes to test by the stan-

dards of impartial criticism, the characters and the services of the men of Ohio who have been at the front in the nineteenth century, I think that the name of Rutherford Birchard Hayes will lead all the rest. Grant and Sherman and Sheridan were greater generals; Garfield was a greater genius; and there have been greater orators and greater jurists and greater educators; but take him all in all, for an all-round man — citizen, soldier, statesman, scholar, man of books, man of brains, man of affairs, husband, father, philanthropist, neighbor, friend, there is not another who will measure quite as large as the good man who has just gone.

I have named Garfield; there is a somewhat striking parallel between the origin of these two Ohio Presidents. Abram Garfield came, with a little family, from Central New York to Cuyahoga County in 1830; made a fairly prosperous beginning of a home there, and suddenly died leaving a widow with four young children, the youngest of whom, then but two years old, was to be the future President.

Rutherford Hayes, a thrifty farmer and trader of Vermont, came to Ohio in 1817, and settled in Delaware, where, after five years of successful industry, he died, leaving a wife and two children. Three months



after his father's untimely death, Rutherford Birchard Hayes was born.

Neither of these boys ever knew a father's care; but each had a courageous and devoted mother, and owed the best part of his character to her influence.

The home of the Garfields, after the death of the father, was for years the abode of pinching penury; there were months when the only food was the meal of Indian corn, and when the mother went supperless to bed that the children might not be hungry. From such want as this the children left fatherless in the Delaware home did not suffer; enough was left to keep them in comfort, and although frugality was necessary, there was always plenty. The unmarried brother of Mrs. Hayes, Sardis Birchard, a man of refined taste, of great public spirit, and of ample means, was her good counselor and the guardian of her children. It was the fortune of this uncle, which, in later life, President Hayes received by bequest; it was in the home built by his uncle in Fremont, that the President has lived since 1874.

Not long after her husband's death, the eldest son of Mrs. Hayes was drowned; and there were left to the widow only two of her children. With the sister who was only a year or two his senior, Rutherford Hayes



grew up in a most dear and tender affection. The family lived in a plain brick house in the village of Delaware, but there was a farm in the vicinity from which they drew many of their supplies, and to which the children were always fond of resorting. Mr. Howells's sketch of these early years will bear reciting:

“The greatest joys of a happy childhood were the visits the brother and sister made to the farm in the sugar season, in cherry time and when the walnuts and hickory nuts were ripe; and its greatest cross was the want of children's books, with which the village lawyer's family was supplied. When the uncle Birchard began in business he satisfied their heart's desire for this kind of literature, and books of a grave and mature sort seem to have always abounded with them. They read Hume's and Smollett's English history together; the sister of twelve years interpreted Shakespeare to the brother of ten; they read the poetry of Mr. Thomas Moore, (then so much finer and grander than now) and they paid Sir Walter Scott the tribute of dramatizing together his ‘Lady of the Lake,’ and were duly astonished and dismayed to learn afterwards that they were not the sole inventors of the dramatization of poems—that even their admired ‘Lady of the Lake’ had long been upon the stage. The influence of an

older sister upon a generous and manly boy is always very great; and it is largely to this sister's unfailing instincts and ardent enthusiasm for books that her brother [owed] his life-long pleasure in the best literature. She not only read with him; she studied at home the same lessons in Latin and Greek which he recited privately to a gentleman of the place [it was Judge Sherman Finch, of Delaware, with whom the lad began these studies]; she longed to be a boy, that she might go to college with him. In the futile way she must, so remote from all instruction, she strove to improve herself in drawing and painting. One of the first schoolmasters was Daniel Granger, 'a little thin, wiry Yankee,' of terrible presence, but of good enough heart, whom the love he bore to learning obliged to flog boys of twice his own bulk, with furious threats of throwing them through the school house walls, and of making them 'dance like parched peas,'—which dreadful behavior and menaces 'rendered all the younger children horribly afraid of him' and perhaps did not so much advance the brother's and sister's education as their private studies and reading had done; that is frequently the result of a too athletic zeal for letters on the part of instructors. The children were not separated for any length of time until

the brother's fourteenth year, when he went away to the Academy at Norwalk, Ohio, and after that they were little together during his preparation for College in Middletown, Connecticut, and his College years at Kenyon College, Ohio. But throughout this time they wrote regularly to each other; she took the deepest interest in all his studies; their devoted affection continued in their maturer life, and when her death parted them it left him with the sorrow of an irreparable loss."

The Middletown principal strongly urged that Rutherford should go to Yale; but in the family councils it was judged inexpedient. The necessary expense at New Haven, said the Connecticut dominie, including everything except clothing and pocket money, would range from \$150 to \$200. That was in 1838. The frugality of the family life is indicated by the fact that so much as this could not well be spared, though it is probable that the wish to see the boy a little oftener than would be possible in that banishment, helped to fix his location as a student at Kenyon College. His preparation for College had been thorough, and he took up the work of the Freshman year with no sense of a burden. I must find room here for another bright paragraph from Mr. Howells:

“His fellow students of that day remember his overflowing jollity and drollery more distinctly than his ardor in study, though his standing was always good. Even in the serious shades of Middletown his mirthful spirit and his love of humor bubbled over into his exercise books, where his translations from Homer are interspersed with mock-heroic law-pleas from Western courts — evidently transcribed from newspapers — and every sort of grotesque extravagance in prose or rhyme. The increased dignity of a collegian seems to have rebuked this school-boy fondness for crude humor; a commonplace book of the most unexceptionable excerpts from classic authors of various languages records the taste of this time, and the reflections on abstract questions in young Hayes’s journals are commonly of that final wisdom which the experience of mankind has taught us to expect in the speculations of Freshmen and Sophomores. They are good fellows, hearty, happy, running over with pranks and jests, and joyous and original in everything but their philosophy, which must be forgiven them for the sake of the many people who remain Sophomores all their lives. Hayes was a boy who loved all honest manly sports. He was a capital shot with the rifle, and he allowed

a due share of his time to hunting, as well as fishing—to which he was even more devoted—swimming and skating.”

At the first Christmas vacation he walked home—forty miles—in twelve hours; and after Christmas returned on foot to College through snow four inches deep. It was a vigorous lad of sixteen who could venture on a feat like that. It reminds us of Carlyle trudging from Annandale to Edinburgh, in his college days; and gives us a glimpse of the hardships undergone by college boys of a day not very remote, in pursuit of education. The path is easier in these days; I wonder if the prize at the end of it is worth as much now as it was then? That discipline of heroic effort and heroic sacrifice—I wonder if anything in the great laboratories, and the great libraries, and the multifarious courses of instruction, quite makes up for the lack of that.

Young Hayes was a jovial comrade and a vigorous lover of out-door life, but he was a good student. His diary shows how seriously he takes himself in hand; how frankly he recognizes his own defects and foibles and sets himself to mend them; how eagerly he looks forward to the life before him. He is going to be a lawyer, and he sees that that means

hard work; but he is not afraid of it. Political contests interest him keenly; he does not disguise from himself the fact that he may take part in them by and by, nor does he blush to own to himself that he has aspirations for service in this line. But there are a few sentences from this college boy's journal which possess great significance, for they contain the master light of all his seeing. "The reputation which I desire," he says, "is not that momentary eminence which is gained without merit and lost without regret;" and then he copies and adopts this golden maxim: "*Give me the popularity that runs after, not that which is sought for.*" It was the elder Pitt—the Great Commoner of England—who said that first, but hardly lived up to it. The great Commoner of Ohio made the sentiment his own in his boyhood, and never swerved from it to the end of his life. He never held an office to which he asked any man to nominate him; he never wore an honor that was not freely conferred upon him. He could no more have been an office-seeker than he could have been a pickpocket. Every instinct of his nature would have revolted at the suggestion that he enter the political field as a candidate and try to capture a nomination.



This might serve to indicate the temper and quality of this jovial-hearted, serious-minded, high-spirited boy. But there is another little sketch written by one who was in college with him that I must let you see.

“Hayes was the champion in college, in debate, class-section, and in the foot-path; cheerful, sanguine, and confident of the future, never seeing cause for desponding; was a young man of substantial physique; in my whole acquaintance I never knew of his being sick one day, and so free from any weaknesses as to seem indefatigable. His greatest amusements were fishing and chess. In company he was humorous to hilarity; told quick, pungent stories, many of which I remember with laughter to this day; took things as they came; used to laugh at the shape of our boarding-house roast beef, but still ate.

“I do not think he had many intimate friends. Those with whom he was intimate were, and still are, the best men of my acquaintance. I don't remember a single man with whom he was intimate but that has been successful in his vocation. \* \* \* In his political labors I am sure he never entangled himself by promises, or by such intimacies as to bind him, but never shrank from tackling any subject or

measure of policy when brought to him. He never walked around anything, but took it by the horns and shook it, or was shaken. I think him a square specimen of an Anglo-Saxon honest man, stubbornly square in his views; of simple ideas of life; that is, he had such ideas as would make him prefer heaping round measure of good to pretension and false appearances.

“The independence of his character was shown on commencement day at Kenyon. He was valedictorian, and I remember how grand he looked in my boy eyes, because he was not able to have splendid, new clothes, and was independent enough to do without. That was the first impression made on my mind, evidencing a pure, thorough self-sacrifice. I was but sixteen years old, and I think I see him now, with what we knew then as a box-coat with side-pockets, when all the rest were dressed in new black cloth frock-coats.”

Any one with an eye for a man will detect one here, I think, in this twenty-year-old boy stepping out of college at the head of his class, with a dignity and force of character that doesn't need to borrow much from the tailor or the dancing-master. He is at the head, thus far, and I don't think that we



shall look for him in the rear at any point in the march.

From Kenyon he comes to Columbus, and here began, in 1842, his law studies in the office of Sparrow & Matthews, keeping his hold on the good literature all the while, and beginning, also, the study of German. After ten months of this private study, good fortune sends him to the Harvard law school, where the attraction, mentioned in his diary, was "the instruction of those eminent jurists and teachers, Story and Greenleaf." Rare, indeed, was the opportunity of personal contact with these giants of jurisprudence, whom the law student of to-day can know only through the desiccated medium of treatises and text books. The sketches of these two great characters, and of their methods of instruction, which we find in his diary, show how deep was the impression which they made upon his mind. To Story, especially, does he continually return, with notes of admiration for the versatility, the humor, the unstudied eloquence, above all the lofty ideality and conscientiousness of the great jurist. It was much more than a good knowledge of law that he gained in this school—he gained, also, the confirmation and enlargement of all the best purposes of his life.

In the stimulating literary atmosphere of Cambridge and Boston his tastes are gratified; he hears lectures by Mr. Longfellow on literature; he listens to Mr. Bancroft, and President Sparks, and Richard Henry Dana; at the political meetings, where Webster, and Choate, and Winthrop, and John Quincy Adams are speakers, he is an eager and observant auditor. In 1844 his studies are completed; he is admitted to the bar, and begins the practice of the law in company with Mr. Ralph P. Buckland, in the town of Fremont, then known as Lower Sandusky.

But the overwork of the last few years had told upon him, and there were grave signs of pulmonary trouble. He was compelled, very speedily, to give up all work, and to betake himself to the sunny South, where, with an old Texan class-mate, a few months of out-of-door life brought him perfect restoration. Returning, he paused for a few days at Cincinnati, and then determined to make it his home. Another law partnership was formed, and the young man sat down, his law books supplemented always by the best literature of the day, and waited for the coming clients. The young lawyer is apt to have plenty of time to review his legal studies; but not every

young lawyer finds so much recreation in other good books as young Hayes seems to have done. He was soon a member of a famous literary club of Cincinnati, including men like Chase, and Corwin, and Ewing, and Hoadly, and Stanley Matthews; and the meetings of the club were full of mental invigoration and refreshment. Presently, the clients began to arrive—not in troops, of course, but with encouraging frequency. A notable case that soon occurred was that of a poor, under-witted creature, Nancy Farrer, who had been made the dupe and tool of a fiend, and under his instigation had poisoned several persons. To her defense he was assigned by the Court. Mr. Hayes believed her to be mentally incapable of crime, and gave himself with all his energies to the task of saving her life. At the first trial she was convicted, but a writ of error was granted, and in the Supreme Court his plea was triumphant; the judgment of the court below was reversed; the prisoner was granted a new trial; but before that could take place an inquest of lunacy pronounced the poor creature insane, and she was sent to the asylum. This victory gave Mr. Hayes much reputation, and his practice soon began to increase.

It was about this time, in December, 1852, that

he was married to Miss Lucy Ware Webb, of Cincinnati. Of a life that was full of felicities, this was the one most benignant fortune. Rarely, I suppose, has any wedded pair been more happily mated; each found in the other all that choice could compass or heart could crave; and the home set up forty years ago in Cincinnati came about as near to the ideal as we are apt to come in America. Many of you knew Mrs. Hayes, as I did not; and I will not attempt her portraiture. But the whole nation knows her as one of the noblest of our matrons, illustrious for her grace, her winning kindness, her lofty character; worthy to rank with Martha Washington and Abigail Adams, among the highest types of American womanhood. Rutherford Birchard Hayes was a pretty well-built man already, but this marriage brought him a great reinforcement. To such an influence as this his mind was open; and it is perfectly safe to say that to whatever was lofty in his aims or heroic in his endeavors the judgment of his wife gave confirmation and support.

In the Fremont campaign Mr. Hayes was an active participant, and a mourner, of course, at the Pathfinder's defeat. When the next campaign came on he threw himself into it with new ardor, and hailed

the election of Lincoln as the beginning of the end. And when Sumter fell and the first call for troops was heard, his answer was prompt and clear. "Judge Matthews and I," so he wrote on May 15, 1861, "have agreed to go into the service for the war—if possible, into the same regiment. I spoke my feelings to him, which he said were his own, that this was a great and necessary war, and that it demanded the whole power of the country; *that I would prefer to go into it, if I knew that I was to be killed in the course of it* rather than to live through and after it without taking any part in it."

Soon a Colonel's commission came to him from President Lincoln—probably at the suggestion of Secretary Chase; but he sent it back; he knew he was not yet fit to lead a regiment; he would begin lower. Meantime he was studying Hardee diligently, and in a few weeks a Major's commission came to him from Governor Dennison, assigning him to the Twenty-third Ohio, whose Colonel was Rosecrans, and whose Lieut. Colonel was Stanley Matthews. Two days later he was here at Camp Chase; and by the 25th of July the regiment, raw enough, doubtless, was on its way to West Virginia.

I cannot tell the story of that faithful and heroic

service. It is enough to say that Rutherford Hayes proved himself a clear headed, capable officer, and a gallant leader of men. Cool and unimpassioned as he ordinarily seemed, he was a dashing leader of a charge, and his bravery on many a hotly contested field was amply demonstrated. Four times he was wounded—once or twice severely; but he never left the field while he had strength to stand. He never sought promotion, but his service demanded it, and the end of the war found him wearing the epaulettes of a major general by brevet.

In the last year of the war, he was nominated for Congress while in the field, and somebody was so infelicitous as to propose to him that he get a leave of absence and come home and stump his district; "Your suggestion," he answered, "was certainly made without reflection. An officer fit for duty, who at this crisis would abandon his post to electioneer for Congress, ought to be scalped. You may feel perfectly sure I shall do no such thing." He was elected, nevertheless; but he did not take his seat until the war was over, and his soldiers were mustered out of the service.

It was in December, 1865, that he first assumed the duties of representative at Washington, and at



once began, in his quiet, unostentatious way, to serve his country. As Chairman of the Library Committee, his care was given to the perfection of that great instrument of knowledge; "chiefly by his efforts the space and material were increased threefold." He made few speeches; to one who wrote urging that he add to the wordy deluge, he answered curtly: "I am disgusted at the shameful waste of time and patience the so-called orators of Washington make." Before the end of his term he was renominated by acclamation, and re-elected by a majority greater than that of any other candidate upon his ticket. But Ohio had other work for him, and much against his own will he was called out of Congress in 1867 to lead his party as its candidate for Governor in a contest with the strongest opponent in the State, our distinguished townsman, the Honorable A. G. Thurman. Victory in such a combat was surely a mark of distinction. In 1869 he was renominated, again by acclamation; and again was successful against no less an antagonist than the Honorable George H. Pendleton. At the close of this period he returned for four years to private life; when he was again, after the most positive refusal to permit the use of his name as a candidate, dragged from his retire-

ment in Fremont, and elected for the third time Governor, this time over another very strong opponent, the Honorable William Allen. It was this victory that made him President. His reputation had by this time become national; the people of the nation had come to understand something of his straight-forward honesty and devotion to principle; and although there were presented to the Convention of 1876, quite a number of names of gentlemen who had claims upon the office, and who had compassed sea and land, to secure the nomination, the one man who had not lifted his finger to gain it was chosen in their stead.

Of the painful contest which finally put General Hayes in possession of the Presidency, it is not fitting that I should speak in this place, at any length. For many months the result of the election was left in doubt, and party passion was so inflamed that there was danger of revolution. Opinions formed under such circumstances are not apt to be judicial; and it is not easy for men on one side to get the point of view of their opponents. President Hayes has been bitterly censured, by a few persons, ever since that day, for accepting an office which was tainted with fraud. For my own part, with the most sincere desire to preserve



in the whole controversy a judicial frame of mind, and with grave doubts, all the while, as to whether his election was beyond question, I thought at the time, and have always thought, that General Hayes did exactly what he ought to have done; that his good sense and his patriotism were never more manifest than when he accepted, without hesitation, the office by law conferred upon him, and proceeded without faltering to discharge its duties.

It must be remembered that the question of the real rights in this case was a very difficult one. On one side the suffrage had been tainted by stupendous fraud; on the other it had been perverted by shameful violence. Which was the greater wrong, I do not believe that an archangel could have told. But, after anxious days, the Congress had determined upon a method by which the dispute should be settled. The tribunal thus created was certainly a legal tribunal, the highest in the land. By that tribunal the office was given to General Hayes. What could he do but take it? To refuse it would have been to invite revolution and anarchy.

I beg to quote, in this connection, what I wrote and published at the time respecting this unhappy business. "To prove that one of these candidates is not

entitled to the electoral vote of either of these states is not to prove that the other candidate is entitled to it. The election was vitiated in several states by fraud and intimidation. And it would be difficult for a perfectly unprejudiced judge to determine which of the two candidates had the better moral right to the office.

“When, therefore, it is demanded that Mr. Hayes shall resign because his title to the Presidency is tainted with fraud, the question arises whether anybody has a better title. Doubtless the irregularity of this process by which he was put in power has greatly distressed him, as it has distressed all patriotic citizens. But the last election was, in fact, no election. Who was rightfully the President it was impossible to determine. Somebody must be invested with the office. And the Congress at length agreed upon a plan by which the matter should be settled. By that plan Mr. Hayes was designated. His legal right to the office is as good as the National Legislature and the Supreme Court can make it. His moral right is as good as that of Mr. Tilden and better than that of anybody else.”

This statement may not express the opinions of all honest men; but it expresses the opinion of one who tried hard to see the rights of the case; and I have no doubt that this was substantially the view which

President Hayes took of the situation. That his acceptance of the Presidency was regarded by him as a patriotic duty, nobody who knew him could question.

The only utterance of his during that exciting controversy was a private letter to Senator Sherman, afterwards published :

“ You feel, I am sure, as I do about this whole business. A fair election would have given us about forty electoral votes at the South—at least that many. But we are not to allow our friends to defeat one outrage and fraud by another. There must be nothing crooked on our part. Let Mr. Tilden have the place by violence, intimidation, and fraud, rather than undertake to prevent it by means that will not bear the strictest scrutiny.”

It was not possible for Rutherford Hayes to say anything else but that, or to do anything which was essentially contrary to that.

How manfully he took up the duties of his high office, and with what patience, firmness, and courage he discharged them, there is no time now to tell. That the administration of Mr. Hayes was in all respects the ablest, the purest, and the most successful administration that this country has had since the death of Abraham Lincoln is an opinion for which I am pre-

pared to give good reasons. The reins of government were placed in his hands at a time of the greatest difficulty; every influence was hostile; his party was in a minority in both houses of Congress; his exasperated opponents were by no means loth to hamper and cripple him; and against all these discouragements he steadily carried forward his administration on firm lines of well-chosen policy until he had won the confidence of the whole American people. "The President," says one biographer, "found the country greatly agitated by antagonisms and alarms; its currency debased; its industry and trade depressed, and its credit unsettled, and subject to the issue of an existing crisis unprecedented in its bearings. He left it at peace in all sections, with a currency unequalled in stability and abundance; with industries and trade in all branches at the maximum of healthful activity, and with the public credit higher than ever before, at home and abroad, and second to that of no other nation."

One of the most distinguished supporters of Mr. Tilden was Charles Francis Adams, Jr. After the close of the Hayes administration, Mr. Adams, speaking at a meeting of the Reform Club in New York, volunteered this testimony:

"President Hayes was no choice of mine. I did not

vote for him. I never considered him honestly elected, though he was legally inaugurated. Still, bygones are bygones, and as a fair-minded man I gladly and publicly concede that President Hayes's administration, taken as a whole, has been no less honorable to himself than creditable to the country. It has been cleanly and honest and of good repute. That, in some respects, it has fallen short of its own great promises, is apparent to all the world. But that is of course. It could not have been otherwise, for it promised the impracticable. Taken as a whole, however, it has been an administration which will bear comparison with the best and purest of those which have preceded it, and it is an administration which the great mass of those who mind their own business would be glad to have continued for the next four years."

The friends of President Hayes can afford to let a sober verdict like that stand as the sufficient answer to the vilification of those creatures who pursued him with their malice while he lived and now crawl forth to spit their venom on his new-made grave. There is a class of miscreants in whom a character like that of Rutherford B. Hayes awakens an instinctive antagonism. Their abuse is the unfailing meed of every honorable character. They are as sure to fly into a

passion at the sight of a good man as the devils were to cry out when the Man of Nazareth appeared. One of the highest credentials of Mr. Hayes to the possession of an unsullied character is the fiendish malignity with which in certain quarters he has been pursued and assailed.

Let me seek, now, in a few closing paragraphs, to set forth what seem to me the elements of his greatness.

And first, I would name the simple dignity and manliness of his habitual conduct. There was no surplusage of manners; there was always just the simple, sincere, unpretentious gentleman. "Nor does he," said one who knew him well, "wear a smirking face, as if he were a candidate for admiration; but a fine sunny countenance, such as men and women respect and children love. He doesn't run to meet you, and call you 'my very dear sir!' He takes you by the hand, with a cordial kindness which recognizes the universal brotherhood of man, and impresses you that he is a man who gets above nobody, and nobody gets above him." An old citizen of Columbus, who has always been radically opposed to President Hayes in politics, said yesterday: "I have always loved Hayes, ever since he was here in the Governor's office. I was a



clerk in one of the departments in the State House then; and whenever he wanted any information in the office, instead of sending a messenger, and ordering somebody to hunt it up for him, he was apt to come round himself, and sit down by the clerk, and look matters over with him, in a perfectly friendly, unpretending way. He put on no airs because he was Governor; he was just a man like all the rest of us; and I formed a very strong personal attachment for him."

His sturdy independence is next to be noted. No man ever stood more squarely on his own two feet. He would take no favors that cost him any sacrifice of manhood. He was ambitious; no doubt about that; from his youth he cherished the hope of winning honor from his fellow men, but he meant to win it by deserving it, not by scheming for it. He never asked for a nomination; never winked an eyelid to secure one. When, after his third election to the governorship, the people of Ohio began to couple his name with the Presidency, he gave himself no concern about it. "No man," says Mr. Howells, "could hear himself much talked about for the chief place in a nation like this without feeling some share of the popular excitement, but no man was less capable of pushing himself for such a place than Hayes. We have seen many

letters of his, written during the period when the movement in his favor was gathering strength and form—and they all point to the fact that, while he was not indifferent to it, he was firmly resolved to have nothing to do with it. In one of these letters, shown us by his correspondent, he wrote: ‘I am not pushing, directly or indirectly. It is not likely that I shall. If the sky falls we shall all catch larks. On the topics you name, a busy seeker after truth would find my views in speeches and messages, but I shall not help him to find them. I appreciate your motives and your friendship. But it is not the thing for you and me to enroll ourselves in the great army of office-seekers. Let the currents alone.’” “I can do nothing,” he wrote to another intimate friend, “to aid myself.” And then, in allusion to reports that he had entered into alliance with certain politicians, he says: “The truth is, I am in no way complicated, entangled or committed with the parties you name or anybody else.” I suppose that no President, for the last fifty years—perhaps no President since Washington—has gone into office so absolutely free from obligations as he was. When his cabinet was announced, that fact was evident. Nothing was ever plainer than that that cabinet was made by one hand, for one purpose—not



to pay debts, not to please the politicians, but simply to give the country a good administration.

Closely related to this trait of independence was his calm self-reliance. He knew himself; and he knew that there was one man in Ohio who could be depended on. He knew his powers, and was assured that they would not fail him. He knew his purposes, that they were unselfish, honorable, worthy of realization; and he expected to realize them. In his diary, while the discussion was going on about his candidacy, these words were written: "With so general an impression in my favor in Ohio, and a fair degree of assent elsewhere \* \* \* I have supposed that it was possible I might be nominated. But with no opportunity and no desire to make combinations or to lay wires, I have not thought my chances worth much consideration. I feel less diffidence in thinking of this subject than perhaps I ought. It seems to me that good purposes and the judgment, experience and firmness I possess, would enable me to execute the duties of the office well. I do not feel the least fear that I should fail." There isn't a grain of conceit about that; but it is a man that you hear talking.

His faith in principle was also perfect. The right is for him the expedient—the thing that ought to

be done can be done; it is, after all, the easiest and safest thing to do. It was this that made his choice so clear and his counsels so unfaltering in the days when financial follies had become epidemic.

And, finally, the one comprehensive word which sums up his highest and strongest qualities as a public man is patriotism. This takes your thoughts, perhaps, to the tented field—to the bivouac and the march and the battle; and it took him thither, beyond a doubt, and made of him a soldier of whom Grant said: "His conduct on the field was marked by conspicuous gallantry, as well as the display of qualities of a higher order than mere personal daring." But the patriotism of General Hayes was not consummated when he tore off his shoulder-straps and unbuckled his sword. The best of it, the bravest of it, was yet to come. The patriotism of General Hayes was love of country, of the whole country—not of any section—though he was proud of his own commonwealth; not of any party—though he was a loyal Republican—but of the whole land, the whole people. There are plenty of men to whom patriotism is a mere sentiment; the only motive that really moves them in public affairs is love of party. To that their real loyalty is given; their conduct abund-

antly shows that they would rather see their country suffer loss at the hands of their own party than prosper at the hands of their opponents. No matter how beneficent a measure may be, it shall not prevail, if they can help it, unless their party can hold the offices. The other party they count as the enemy; it is the word by which they uniformly speak of it; it is the conception under which they always think of it. Their political plans stop short, therefore, with the promotion of the success of their own party; the other half of their fellow citizens are practically aliens. Now this is not the spirit of patriotism. No thorough-going partizan can claim to be a patriot. He is a kind of semi-patriot, a lover of half his country; and even as a half-truth is often the worst sort of a lie; so this intense partizanship which makes a man think of his political opponents as enemies is the root of the most pestilent political immoralities. Now President Hayes was a man who, although a loyal supporter of his own party, never lost sight of the fact that his primary obligation was to the country, and not to the party. He would not sacrifice the public interest to the interest of his party. To him party was only an instrumentality, not an end; he would use it just so far as he could make it serve justice and righteousness, no

further. When he saw that parties were coming to exist mainly for the sake of holding the offices, he struck at that vice with all his strength. "This system," he said, "destroys the independence of the separate departments of the government; it tends directly to extravagance and official incapacity; it is a temptation to dishonesty; it hinders and impairs that careful supervision and strict accountability by which alone faithful and efficient public service can be secured; in every way it degrades the civil service and the character of the government. It ought to be abolished. The reform should be thorough, radical and complete." He did what he could to secure this end. And he determined to take the stumbling blocks out of his own path. "Believing," he said in his letter of acceptance, "that the restoration of the civil service to the system established by Washington, and followed by the early Presidents, can be best accomplished by an Executive who is under no temptation to use the patronage of his office to secure his own re-election, I desire to perform what I regard as a duty, in stating now my inflexible purpose, if elected, not to be a candidate for election to a second term." He said it, and he stood by it. Nobody who knew him had any doubt that he would do so. Congress sneered at his

proposition to reform the civil service, and refused to make any appropriation by which the work could be carried on; but in spite of Congress he introduced the reformed methods into some of the most important offices; and when he believed that certain high officials of his own party were using their patronage to reward political workers, he incontinently turned them out, and told their successors that the offices must be conducted on strictly business principles. He had done what he could, in the same direction, when he was Governor of Ohio. In one of his inaugural addresses he strongly urged that our state institutions be put upon this basis; that officers and employes should be appointed on business principles, and not as a reward for political activity. "When he was Governor," says Mr. Howells, "he was importuned by old and dear friends to turn out the Democratic State Librarian, and give the office, one of the few in the Governor's gift, to a most worthy and competent Republican. He refused. "The present incumbent," he wrote, "of the librarianship is a faithful, pains-taking old gentleman with a family of invalid girls dependent on him. His courtesy and evident anxiety to accommodate all who visit the library have secured him the endorsement of almost all who are in the habit of using the books.

and, under the circumstances, I can not remove him. Old associations, your fitness and claims draw me the other way, but you see, etc., etc. Very sincerely, R. B. Hayes."

It is in this determination to keep the claims of party subordinate to the interests of the whole public that I discern the keynote of President Hayes's patriotism. That famous phrase of his inaugural in 1877, "He serves his party best who serves his country best," illustrates his divergence from the common run of politicians. How impossible it is to get that conception into the mind of the average political leader. And yet how bright the maxim shines in the light of President Hayes's example. No recent President was less of a partizan; none was so successful a political leader. He found his party in the Slough of Despond, and he left it on the Heights of Victory. And this he did by simply ignoring all schemes of party aggrandizement, and giving himself, with a single eye and a resolute purpose, to the service of the whole country.

What he did for the pacification of the South was done upon the same principle. He had helped to conquer the South; but he was man enough to see that the era of subjugation must come to an end; that the South must be free to govern itself. There-



fore he pledged himself, in his letter of acceptance, to put forth his best efforts "in behalf of a civil policy which will wipe out forever the distinction between North and South in our common country." That promise, also, he kept. The South was pacified. No ideal condition of things was realized in that quarter; but a great political improvement took place. The negroes certainly fared no worse than they had done under the policy of repression; the temper of the Southern people was marvellously improved, and the new era was well begun. So perfect was this work of peace, that the Southern question, which for a quarter of a century had been the burning question of our politics, was not mentioned in the first message of President Hayes's successor. What a triumph of statesmanship that was, let the future historian tell.

With the even mind of the man who has performed great duties manfully, and borne great trials uncomplainingly, President Hayes laid down the burdens of office in March, 1881, and turned his face homeward. Malignants among his opponents followed him with their curses; the spoilsmen of both parties barked at his heels, of course; the men whose interest in politics was mainly selfish all hated him with a



cordial and justifiable hatred, and never lost a chance to revile him. The dispraise of such men is a decoration. Woe to you when they speak well of you! The President bore to his home the grateful assurance that the men to whom office is simply plunder owed him no good will. But he carried with him, also, the respect, the honor, the affection of the great body of honest people of both parties.

To his old neighbors in Fremont, who greeted him on his return, he said:

“The question is often heard, ‘What is to become of the man—what is he to do—who, having been chief magistrate of the Republic returns at the end of his official term to private life?’ It seems to me that the answer is near at hand, and sufficient: Let him, like every other good American citizen, be willing and prompt to bear his part in every useful work that will promote the happiness and the progress of his family, his town, his state, and his country. With this disposition he will have work enough to do, and that work of a sort which yields more individual contentment and gratification than belong to the more conspicuous employments of the life he has left behind.” Manly words are these; but what luster his life since that day has shed upon them!

How modestly, how patiently, how industriously he has given himself, in the last dozen years, to all kinds of good work. To the wise dispensation of great charities, to the study of the conditions of the dependent classes—more especially to the great cause of education in all its phases, he has consecrated the ripeness of his wisdom, the maturity of his manhood. Few men in this land have done so large an amount of unremunerated service. “I thought,” he said to me a year ago, as he paused on the threshold of my study, “that when I laid down my official cares I should have a tolerably easy life; but I have been kept about as busy for the last ten years working for other people, as I ever was in my life. And I don’t deny that I enjoy it.” To our own university the service that he has rendered has been invaluable; the loss that it has suffered in his death it is not easy to compute.

President Hayes was reticent, I judge, about his religious experience. He was brought up in the Presbyterian Church; with his wife, while she lived, he was a constant attendant upon the Methodist Church; I do not know that he formulated for himself any creed; he was content, probably, with a very short statement of some of the fundamental truths of

religion. He was profoundly interested in the truth which constitutes the heart of all faiths; and he was a sympathetic and appreciative listener in the house of God. He asked me, not long ago, if I knew a certain minister of our own communion. I replied that I had known him from his Seminary days. "Well," he said, "I heard him preach last Sunday at Brattleboro, Vermont. And it was a very fine sermon. You know," he added, with a humorous twinkle, "we always think that a man who agrees with us is an able man. But the text of this sermon was a striking one: 'The second is like unto it.' That was all there was of the text; but it was enough, I assure you, to furnish the foundation of a very strong discourse."

I could easily believe it. "The second is like unto it."—*equal* to it. It is what our Master says about the second great commandment of the law. The first great commandment is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," the second is like unto it—equally binding, equally fundamental, equally religious. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The fact that had made its impression upon the President's mind was the equivalence of these commandments. That indicated his hearty recognition of both of them. But I suppose that if he had been challenged to confess his

faith, it would have been uttered in the words of the beloved apostle: "He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" And if the word of that apostle is true—that "every one who loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God," then the unselfish ministry of the last ten years would prove that the first great commandment was also the law of his life.

It is not easy to convince our hearts that this good friend of ours is not to be seen among us again. He was wont to come frequently; it was good to hear of his arrival; it was pleasant to meet him in the street; there was always a little more courage for work after we had looked for a moment into his face. Here was a man, we said to ourselves, who has lived. What an answer is his life to the plea of the mercenary politician that success is impossible to the unselfish patriot! Who, among all these schemers and tricksters will ever reach the height on which this man stood—

"Who never sold the truth to serve the hour

Nor paltered with the Eternal God for power!"

But he has passed. And what remains to us is the memory of a clean-handed, clear-minded, simple-mannered, great-hearted man, and the faith which his life has quickened in our hearts, that

"All good things await  
 Him who cares not to be great,  
 But as he saves or serves the State."

He has gone. "The good gray head that all men  
 knew," will not again be seen in our assemblies:

"No more in soldier fashion will he greet  
 With lifted hand the gazer in the street.  
 O friends, our chief state-oracle is dead:  
 Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,  
 The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,  
 Whole in himself, a common good.  
 Mourn for the man of amplest influence,  
 Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
 Our greatest, and with least pretense—  
 Great in council, and great in war—

\* \* \* \* \*

Rich in saving common-sense,  
 And as the greatest only are  
 In his simplicity sublime."

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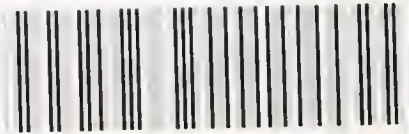








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